**Definition of Elegy**

**An Elegy is a sad and thoughtful poem lamenting the death of a person.**

The elegy--the traditional poem for mourning--began in ancient Greece as a sad song lamenting love and death, often accompanied by a flute and written in a specific meter. The form, however, moved away from its fixed metrical roots when it was adopted by Renaissance poets such as [Ben Jonson](http://www.poets.org/bjons), Alexander Pope, and [John Donne](http://www.poets.org/jdonn). These writers made a distinction between a proper elegy--which expresses sorrow and a search for consolation--and "elegiac" poetry that meditates on loss, grief, death, and mortality in a variety of verse forms, such as the ode, epitaph, and eulogy.

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| |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | It was many and many a year ago, In a kingdom by the sea, That a maiden there lived whom you may know By the name of ANNABEL LEE; And this maiden she lived with no other thought Than to love and be loved by me.  I was a child and she was a child, In this kingdom by the sea; But we loved with a love that was more than love- I and my Annabel Lee; With a love that the winged seraphs of heaven Coveted her and me.  And this was the reason that, long ago, In this kingdom by the sea, A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling My beautiful Annabel Lee; So that her highborn kinsman came And bore her away from me, To shut her up in a sepulchre In this kingdom by the sea.  The angels, not half so happy in heaven, Went envying her and me- Yes!- that was the reason (as all men know, In this kingdom by the sea) That the wind came out of the cloud by night, Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.  But our love it was stronger by far than the love Of those who were older than we- Of many far wiser than we- And neither the angels in heaven above, Nor the demons down under the sea, Can ever dissever my soul from the soul Of the beautiful Annabel Lee.  For the moon never beams without bringing me dreams Of the beautiful Annabel Lee; And the stars never rise but I feel the bright eyes Of the beautiful Annabel Lee; And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side Of my darling- my darling- my life and my bride, In the sepulchre there by the sea, In her tomb by the sounding sea.  Notes: | |